



My friend Kelley Cheng recently headlined her editorial in the latest issue of ISH (at newsstands now) with the words:

NEW YEAR. NEW HOPES. NEW WORLD.

I like the sentiment and the attitude (and told her so in an SMS from Hong Kong): for once, no doom and gloom but a positive outlook.

As you know, I have always pointed out the opportunities that the current crisis offers: Opportunities through media choices and prices, through better stories and through substitution.

So in the spirit of Kelley's editorial, I have some good news to share:

Project Finished In Malaysia

A big brand positioning and –architecture project for a regional client based in Malaysia is being finished this month, with training the Brand Champions within the organisation. This project took about one year to complete, mainly because there were so many complicated touchpoints where we had to define on brand-behaviours. We're changing the logo and packaging carefully and in stages, in order not to confuse consumers. It will be exciting to see the first phase on the supermarket shelves later this year. The clients have become friends over this year, and we hope that we can help them in the later phases of the transition.

New Eco Client in Singapore

Recently we hooked up with a new company bringing green transport to Singapore and the region. We're still within the very preliminary stages of planning the brand audit, but we're already excited about the product which



is a potential recession-winner, very much in line with the times and helping to preserve the environment. Now, if we can help to make it 'cool', I foresee a mega success in Asia and globally.

Crisis Branding Seminar

We hooked up with Pacific Conferences and are planning two 2-day Branding seminars, in Singapore and Hong Kong. I thought it would be interesting to look at how to build a brand in Asia (from brand audit to positioning, touchpoint management to internal branding), including a segment on Crisis Branding where we help the attending CEOs and company directors to find ways to not only weather the storm but benefit from the crisis. As for dates, we're looking at June 22/23 in Singapore and June 25/26 in Hong Kong. Details TBC.

Create, Connect, Convince

My book is going places. Not only does it help my students at SMU and NUS to understand the intricacies of advertising, branding and communication, it will also be available as an E-book in Australia (www.ebooks.com), the USA (www.netlibrary.com, ebookstore.sony.com), the UK (www.dawsonbooks.co.uk) and France (euromed.cyberlibris.com). In addition, Penguin will sell the book in Australia and New Zealand from this month, and it will be catalogued in the US in the Fall '09 list.

Growing Against the Crisis

I recently had some talks in Hong Kong about opening a rep office there – we are pretty close to an agreement. There seems to be a market both for brand consulting and also for training (which we also do). In addition, a former colleague of mine has sent a proposal to open up in a 2nd tier city close to Shanghai, to tap into the huge market of Chinese brands. Still early days for this one, and I will probably have to go and have a look, but a lot of potential. And the market of much potential, little execution – Indonesia? Our Jakarta office is keeping busy, but it's hard work to convince clients to build their brand, since everybody is looking at the elections in April. Maybe May will be a better month.

Let me know if we can help finding ways how your brand can grow against the crisis.

And have a great Spring!

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